

budget, as the people's health and education continue to decline and the population outside of the Brahmin caste lives in abject poverty.

Meanwhile, the Indian Defense Minister held a meeting looking to find ways to "stop the U.S.," which he called "vulgarly arrogant." Remember that we provide millions of dollars each year to help India pay its bills. How "vulgarly arrogant." of us! Other countries whose representatives attended this meeting included Serbia, China, Cuba, Russia, Libya, and Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, we are talking about a country in which there is little respect for religious freedom. On May 20, the government placed the Jathedar of the Akal Takht, Bhai Ranjit Singh, under house arrest. Since Christmas, there has been a wave of violence against Christians. A missionary has been burned to death along with his two young sons, nuns have been raped, priests have been murdered, and Christian churches, prayer halls, and schools have been burned to the ground by allies of the Indian government.

As if all that weren't enough, we have received word that Indian intelligence officers interrogated a journalist named Sikhbir Singh Osan for 45 minutes. For him to have been grilled and harassed by police would have been bad enough, but he was harassed by intelligence officers after he returned from the U.S., Canada, and the U.K., where he covered the recent Sikh 300th anniversary marches and gave a speech on the persecution of Christians.

The government of India is intolerant and anti-American. They do not allow freedom of religion or, apparently, of the press. I am proud to have joined several of my colleagues of both parties in co-sponsoring a resolution that calls for a free and fair plebiscite in Punjab, Khalistan on the question of independence. Freedom is America's mission. By taking steps against the anti-American government of India, we can help promote and extend the blessings of liberty to another corner of the world. We must get started.

DESIGNATION OF EL CAMINO
REAL DE LOS TEJAS AS A NA-
TIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL

HON. CIRO D. RODRIGUEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 30, 1999

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, today I am privileged to introduce legislation that would designate the Camino Real de los Tejas as a National Historic Trail. This camino real, or royal highway, forged the way for the early development of Texas into a Spanish colony, an independent Republic, and a state in the United States. As the first great highway into Texas, this camino real opened the door to trade and cultural exchange which continues to impact our lives today.

The State of Texas recognized the critical importance of these royal highways in 1929 when the state legislature designated portions of El Camino Real de los Tejas, later known as the Old San Antonio Road, as one of Texas historic trails. State Highway 21 marks the trail's pathway in many parts of the state

as do state historical markers. Designation as a National Historic Trail would greatly enhance the resources available for trail preservation and public education of its unique and important history.

The National Park Service completed its feasibility study in July 1998 pursuant to PL 103-145. The study concluded that the proposed trail met all applicable criteria in the National Trails System Act (PL 90-543). Last Congress, the Senate passed similar legislation, the Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail Act of 1998 (S. 2276). The House did not consider this bill nor a companion bill which I introduced in the House (HR 4724).

The bill I am introducing today contains a number of important changes from last year's version. In an effort to clarify the intent of the legislation and to respond to concerns raised during the bill's consideration last Congress, I have worked with the National Park Service to add language addressing the concerns of private property owners. The bill now states unambiguously that no land or interest in land can be acquired by the federal government without the willing consent of the owner, that the federal government has no authority to condemn or appropriate land for the trail, that the trail will not be established on the ground unless a private property owner voluntarily requests to participate, and that designating the trail does not confer any additional authority to apply other, non-trail federal laws. These provisions reflect my desire to assuage any concerns that a national historic trail in Texas would negatively impact private property owners. In fact, the experience of the other existing national historic trails suggests just the opposite—private property owners can and do benefit from participating in the trail program, but only if they want to do so.

The Camino Real de los Tejas as defined in this legislation collectively represents a series of roads and trails extending for more than 1,000 miles from Mexico City through Saltillo and Monclova in Mexico to Guerrero and Laredo along the Rio Grande, converging in San Antonio, the provincial capital of Texas from 1772 to 1821, and then heading north and east to Los Adeas, the earlier provincial capital of Texas from 1721 through 1772, now located in Louisiana. Beginning as Indian trails from the earliest days of human activity in the Americas, the trails developed under the Spanish as routes of exploration, missionary work and colonization. The earliest Spanish route stems back to the travels of Alonso de León in 1689 and Terán de los Ríos in 1691. During the next 150 years, explorers, traders, ranchers, armies and missionaries blazed a series of trails through South Texas to San Antonio and from San Antonio through East Texas and Louisiana. Immigration, from both the east and south, traveled along this transportation system.

These trails gained different names over time. In South Texas, beginning at the Presidio del Rio Grande and ending in San Antonio, we find the Lower Presidio Road, or El Camino de en Medio; the Camino Pita; and the Upper Presidio Road. A separate Laredo Road linked Laredo to San Antonio and the Camino Real system. Two major arteries extended northeastward from San Antonio: the

Camino de los Tejas along the Balcones Escarpment; and the Camino Arriba through the Post Oak Savannah. Both of these routes converged again in Nacogdoches, Texas.

All told, various portions of the Camino Real de los Tejas now in the United States extend for some 550 miles and together make up approximately 2,600 miles in combined length. They served as critical trade routes, post roads, cattle trails, and military highways and opened Texas to the world.

The Camino Real de los Tejas linked the Spanish in Mexico to their new outposts in East Texas in the late 17th and early 18th Centuries. These early settlements provided a Spanish presence to counter early French exploration of Texas. The Mission San Antonio de Valero, later known as the Alamo, was established along the Camino real route and later served as a focal point in the military battle for Texas independence. Critical supplies made their way to the American Colonies during the War of Independence via the Camino Real de los Tejas trail system. The Camino Real de los Tejas road system provided the main transportation route for Mexican and Texan armies during the Texas Revolution and continued to play a major role in future military actions.

Recognizing the significance of the Camino Real de los Tejas and its historical importance grounds us for the future and provides opportunities for today. Trail designation will help enhance tourism and economic development in the many cities and towns along the trail system. Local museums and historical sites will be given new opportunities for growth. The San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, an important and beautiful network of missions in the San Antonio area, can provide a base of operations for trail activities. A number of public roads, state parks and national forests can provide public access to this important piece of our history. As we strive to boost international trade, develop our local communities, and enhance educational opportunities, we only have to look to El Camino Real de los Tejas for inspiration.

COMMEMORATING THE PECOS
RODEO

HON. HENRY BONILLA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 30, 1999

Mr. BONILLA. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to represent Pecos, Texas, a community which hosts the world renowned rodeo every 4th of July week. Folks from all across Texas and other states flock to Pecos for this annual event.

In the mid 1800's in cow towns across the state of Texas, a new sport, the Rodeo was created. By 1883, a little town in West Texas, Pecos, launched the first full fledged rodeo. This annual event occurs during the week of our celebration for independence, July 4th.

Tomorrow, July 1, 1999, the tradition continues as the annual Pecos Rodeo begins with several fun filled activities and events. The first Pecos rodeo was held near the town courthouse. What used to be the old rodeo